

# Exchange

**By: Poisoned Scarlet**

Life gave her Eren Jaeger. Annie is taking Eren Jaeger. And the world is a cruel place - Academy-centric.

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by. *Poisoned Scarlett*

Mikasa understands Eren's fascination with Annie because the world has never worked in her favor.

The world has never worked in Mikasa's favor. The world has never worked in Mikasa's favor. *The world has never worked in Mikasa's favor.* It's a chant; it's become law. It has never ever ever given her what she has wanted the most in her insignificant existence. It never gave her the broken wish she uttered when her mother was axed in the neck, it never gave her the cracked plea when she was taken and tied like a swine, but it did give her something else, something she has clung onto since it had come into her hands.

Life gave her Eren Jaeger.

But Annie is taking Eren Jaeger.

Mikasa watches them from the corner of her eye, barely heeding Armin's weak blows. Their instructor patrols each row with a critical eye, scoping out any stragglers, and stops to give pointers and fix stances. Hand-to-hand combat has always come easy for Mikasa, many things in their training have, because she must be the best at them in order to help Eren. Her work, her sweat, her hurt, her blood is for the betterment of Eren and to give him a higher chance of survival once they join the Survey Corps.

She monitors them silently, and does not acknowledge the understanding in Armin's eyes. She does not need his pity; she does not need anyone's pity. She does not need anyone, anyone except for Eren. She needs Eren because Eren was given to her when she

had absolutely nothing left. He was given to her when she was broken and bloody and nothing, just vermin, he was given to her when she had been on the verge of giving into the cruelty of the world.

He had given her a reason to fight.

Himself.

"S-say, Mikasa, why don't we try another technique?" Armin offers, giving her a tentative smile. Mikasa pauses and nods, straightening up mechanically. "Um... I suppose we can try out that defensive technique we learned two weeks ago. I think we can apply it when we use our gear, don't you think?"

Mikasa simply nods, and her gaze strays back to Eren and Annie. The blonde has her fists near her face, her entire body tense and ready and unshakeable, but her blue eyes are the warmest she has ever seen them. There is a warmth with Annie when Eren is around, and there is a happiness with Eren when Annie is around.

And Mikasa doesn't understand why he has to learn such fighting techniques from Annie when Mikasa has been repeatedly named the best fighter in their squad. Mikasa has worked so, so hard. She has bled for this strength, she has done everything she humanly could to be the very best, yet Eren goes to her. He goes to Annie to learn how to fight, he doesn't even ask her for help. It doesn't cross his mind and she knows this with painful accuracy. Mikasa is better than some lone wolf, everyone has said so, everyone thinks so, yet *Eren goes to Annie* because he cannot wait to be away from her.

He wants to be better than her.

In doing all she can to protect him, she has pushed him so far away.

"Mikasa?"

She turns to find Armin smiling weakly at her. "Would you like to spare with Eren instead? I know I'm not very good at fighting..."

Mikasa's eyes soften slightly. "Armin, you fight well. There is nothing to be ashamed of."

"Haha... yeah, but it's the truth, isn't it? I know I'm not good at fighting, Mikasa, there's no need to tell me otherwise. I'm just better at using my head, aren't I?" Armin smiles comfortingly at her. "Just like Eren is good at hand-to-hand combat. Annie is, too, isn't she? She just skips out a lot."

"She slacks off," Mikasa states. Her voice is steel. "She's careless."

"I guess so, but she hasn't slacked off since Eren became her sparring partner," Armin notes, watching Mikasa's expression carefully. He looks away when he finds what he needs. "She looks like she's enjoying herself, actually."

Mikasa tightens her hands into fists. She closes her eyes for a moment, breathes, and levels herself, before turning back to Armin, stating, "If Eren deems her worthy, then I have no reason to doubt her. She has a different technique than what we are learning. Eren finds it important to learn it, so I have no issue with him deviating from our current training regimen. It's what he wants."

"Is it what you want?"

Mikasa only returns to her fighting stance, her black eyes empty. "Armin, we should continue with our own training. If we are caught slacking, we will be punished severely."

Armin nods, gazing at the floor sadly. "Right. Let's continue..."

Life gave her Eren Jaeger.

Annie is taking Eren Jaeger.

And the world is a cruel place.

It has never worked in her favor, and Mikasa knows it never will.

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**A/N:** This was my first attempt at an Attack on Titan fanfic. I hope I did well.

*Scarlett.*